

Message Text

SECRET

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20

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

FRB-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

SP-02 CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 IGA-01 DODE-00

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R 031149Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9515

COMUSMACHTAI BANGKOK

JCS WASHDC

USSAG/7AF NAKHON PHANOM

CINCPAC

CHMEDTC PHNOM PENH

CDR MACTHAI SUPPORT GROUP

CINCPACAF HICKAM AFB

S E C R E T BANGKOK 0130

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES: BACKHAULING OF RICE
FROM BATTAMBANG

REF: (A) BANGKOK 19140; (B) USSAG/7AF/LG MSG 231023Z

DEC 74; (C) CINCPAC MSG 030440Z JAN 75

1. AS PRESSURE FROM THE RTG TO BUY THAI RICE CONTINUES,
THE NEED BECOMES MORE PRESSING TO FIND A WORKABLE
ALTERNATIVE TO THE PRESENT RICE SUPPLY AND TRANSPORT
SYSTEM. CURRENT FIGURES INDICATE APPROXIMATELY 560
SHORT TONS OF RICE ON HAND AT SAMAE SAN, OR A TWO TO
THREE MONTH SUPPLY AT CURRENT CONSUMPTION RATES.
IF, HOWEVER, A DRY SEASON SURGE REQUIREMENT RESULTS
IN CONSUMPTION RATES APPROACHING THOSE OF

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LAST APRIL/MAY, THERE WOULD BE ONLY A TWO-WEEK

SUPPLY.

2. WE ASSUME FROM REFTEL B THAT AIRDROP SUPPORT FROM BATTAMBANG OR POCHENTONG IS AT THIS TIME, AND FOR FORESEEABLE FUTURE, UNFEASIBLE. ALTHOUGH WE ARE STILL WORKING ON THE THAI TO RELENT ON PL 480 RICE FOR CAMBODIAN AIRDROP, WE ARE ALSO MOST INTERESTED IN THE POSSIBILITY OF USE OF SURFACE (TRUCK) BACKHAULING FROM BATTAMBANG TO SAMAE SAN VIA ETO. WOULD APPRECIATE CLARIFICATION ON WHO IS WORKING ON THIS POSSIBILITY AND CURRENT STATUS THEREOF (REFTEL B, PARA 6A). IF THIS IS FOUND TO BE A TECHNICALLY VIABLE ALTERNATIVE, WE ARE PREPARED TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS IMMEDIATELY WITH THE RTG AND ETO ON THE OPERATION.

3. THERE IS NO GUARANTEE THAT A BACKHAULING OPERATION WILL RELIEVE RTG PRESSURE TO BUY THAI RICE OR THAT THE RTG WILL ACCEPT IT AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PL 480. WHILE THE MINISTRIES OF COMMERCE AND AGRICULTURE HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT TRANSSHIPMENT IS NOT IMPORTATION, THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE REMAINS OBDURATE. WE SUGGEST, THEREFORE, THAT PLANS CONTINUE ON YOUR END TO PROCURE THAI RICE IF THIS SHOULD BECOME UNAVOIDABLE.

4. WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR ESTIMATES OF CURRENT RICE STOCKS IN CAMBODIA AND IN-COUNTRY ABILITY TO SUPPORT ENCLAVE REQUIREMENTS.
KINTNER

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